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ABSTRACT

This resource package provides guidelines for use in New Zealand to: (1) help early childhood personnel develop their response to children's special education needs; (2) create confidence among early childhood staff that they are able to cope with children who require special attention; (3) help staff plan for additional resources that may be required; (4) promote the practice of mainstreaming; (5) promote positive discrimination for children with special developmental needs; (6) help early childhood staff gain access to resource people and materials, developmental equipment, aids, funding sources, and specialist consultants; and (7) encourage early childhood personnel to involve and value the support networks for children with special developmental needs and their families. A brief introduction is followed by sections concerning the condition of special developmental need, early childhood charters in New Zealand, environmental design and safety, equipment, funding sources, advice and support, special education service, characteristics of early childhood development units, support agencies, and common myths and practical responses. (RH)

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Meeting the Needs of Young Children with Special Developmental Needs

Te Whakahaerenga me te aawhina

ki nga Kohungahunga e hauatiana

A Resource Booklet for Charter Development in Early Childhood Settings

He pukapuka aawhina mo te whakahaere

Tutohunga

Waahi Kohungahunga



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**THERE ARE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH UNDERLINE
MANY OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CHARTER REQUIREMENTS**

CHILDREN MUST HAVE:

THE RIGHT TO A PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY

**THE RIGHT TO A PLACE IN THEIR LOCAL EARLY
CHILDHOOD CENTRE**

THE RIGHT TO SHARE THE SAME EXPERIENCES AS OTHERS

THE RIGHT TO BE WITH FRIENDS AND SIBLINGS

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1. INTRODUCTION

All guidelines must be integrated with Charter Statements in order to fulfil the 'Treaty of Waitangi' obligations.

This resource package provides **guidelines**

- i. To assist early childhood settings develop their response to special education as required in their Charter and programmes.
- ii. To create a confidence within early childhood settings with their ability to cope adequately with children requiring special developmental needs as part of the setting's generic programme and help settings plan for additional resources that may be required.
- iii. To promote the practice of mainstreaming referred to in the Early Childhood Management Handbook Charter Guidelines, Section 3, page 11.
- iv. To promote positive discrimination for children with special developmental needs for Charter and programme development.
- v. To help early childhood settings gain access to resource people and materials, developmental equipment, aids, funding sources and specialist consultants in areas of need.
- vi. To encourage early childhood settings to involve and value the **support networks** of children with special developmental needs and their families, whanau or hapuu within their particular community and cultural heritage in regard to the Treaty and Iwi ritenga. (refer Section 3, page 6, of Charter Guidelines)

1a. WHAT IS A SPECIAL DEVELOPMENTAL NEED?

A special developmental need is one that cannot be met within the regular early childhood education setting, home, or short term placement without additional support or programme change. It also refers to a disability, developmental delay or learning difficulty for which appropriate support can prevent or minimise handicapping conditions. It may also refer to a child who is identified as at risk of developmental delay. This definition includes very able children who may be described as 'gifted', who also can be seen as requiring additional support and resources. The term does not, in this context, refer to social or cultural issues, for which other community support systems are appropriate. A special developmental need may be ongoing, or it may be short term as in acute hospital admissions.

The ultimate responsibility and rights in decision making regarding a child with a special educational need rests with the child's family, whanau or hapuu.

Based on the statement in the Early Childhood Management Handbook, p.16
Charter Guide

2. EARLY CHILDHOOD CHARTERS

(NB: This section should be read in tandem with the Early Childhood Management Handbook p.16-21 Charter Guide; p.11 - Charters)

The Charter will:

- i. Ensure that issues and provisions concerning special developmental needs feature as a matter of specific attention.
- ii. Ensure appropriate programme change for individual children and/or additional resources are sought where necessary, to allow children with special developmental needs to participate fully in early childhood settings.
- iii. Recognise and value the qualities and skills involved in working with children with special developmental needs.
- iv. Ensure every child in an early childhood setting is valued regardless of race, gender, **disability** or age.
- v. Require that provisions for those with special developmental needs are a responsibility of the early childhood setting and **not** of the child or the family, whanau or hapuu.
- vi. Promote the participation of children with special developmental needs in the education process by involving these children, their caregivers, advocates and other advisors in early childhood programme and curriculum development.
- vii. Ensure equitable treatment of a child with a special developmental need and avoid segregated situations.
- viii. Acknowledge that mainstreaming includes the right of the child's whanau, hapuu or family to make choices and experience responsibility and consequences of such choices.
- ix. Promote the early childhood setting's role within the community as an advocate on behalf of children with special developmental needs.
- x. Ensure that early childhood personnel have access to on-going training to enhance their knowledge and skills in working with children with special developmental needs.
- xi. Acknowledge the contribution of the whanau, hapuu or family as working partners in the planning for each child with special developmental need.

NB: It is vital that early childhood settings incorporate points i - xi into their policies to allow children with special developmental needs to participate fully in early childhood programmes.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN AND SAFETY

- i. The environment of the early childhood setting should be designed and developed in such a manner that it is safe and accessible to all, paying special attention to the Maori rules concerning Ture (Laws) of food, body and environment. This is not just an issue of access for children with disability, it is a matter of concern to all users. The user population is the community, both adults and children, and specifically on a day to day basis includes children, staff and parents.
- ii. Full accessibility pays attention to:

Buildings

Entrances and Steps

- Minimal Cost**
- movable ramps or ground level entrances and thresholds to buildings and rooms.
 - acceptable gradients (slope not to exceed 30 : 360 cm (1 : 12")) Less would be desirable
 - white edgings on steps and stairs
 - handrails - brightly coloured - extending 45cm (18") beyond top and bottom steps.
 - the colour of the door knob should contrast in colour with the area around it
 - the colour of the handrail should contrast with the wall behind it.

Floors

- Minimal Cost**
- ensure smooth floor access through doorways
 - contrasting colour floor to walls and doors
 - tactile floor signals across doorways in areas where the surface is continuous. Grooves are better as tactile strips can often cause tripping.
 - Changes in sound of floor covering can warn visually impaired persons that hazards are coming up. In some situations floor coverings can be selected for their particular sound characteristics.

More Comprehensive Cost

- non-slip surfaces on ramps, steps and floors

Room Layout and Furnishings

Minimal Cost - provision of a quiet rest area.

- fixed tables - cut out to allow individual support and easy access to working surface.
- chairs with arm supports
- foot rests to increase stability.
- brightly coloured lines or arrows directing to toilets, play areas and exits.

More Comprehensive Cost

- doors widened to 78cm (31")

Passages and Corridors

More Comprehensive Cost

- width not less than 122cm (48")

Toilets

Minimal Cost - provision of changing tables

- brightly coloured taps to designate hot and cold.

More Comprehensive Cost

- doors widened to 78cm (31")
- wide cubicles, handrails and grab bars in accessible places to ease in transferring
- special attention to Ture (Laws) of food, body, environment and privacy.

Lighting

- glare and reflections should be eliminated through use of matte surfaces
- lighting should be used to accentuate steps, handrails, decision making points, toilet fixtures, etc.
- avoid blinking lights
- increase light in hallways

Inside and Outside Areas

Minimal Cost - remove all sharp objects

- utilise natural plants, trees and rocks wherever possible

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- provide a safe area for loading and unloading wheelchairs into vehicles
- paths, walkways not to exceed a gradient of 30 : 360cm (1:12"). Less would be desirable

More Comprehensive Cost

- smooth all walkways, paths.
- safe level parking with designated parking spaces for individuals with special needs.

iii. RESOURCE REFERENCES

NZ Standard Code 4121:1985. This is a mandatory Code of Practice for design and access and use of buildings and facilities by people with disabilities. For further information please contact your District Office of the Department of Social Welfare.

Barrier Free - Barrier Free is a programme for the removal of architectural barriers. The series of Barrier Free pamphlets deal with specific issues of accessibility and people with disabilities. The guidelines offered are suitable for generalisation into other building environments.

- eg. 1.1 Vehicle Access and Circulation
1.2 Ramps
1.3 Circulation
1.4 Bathrooms

Copies are available from local Branches of the NZ Crippled Children Society.

iv. PEOPLE RESOURCES

Through

- Disabled Persons Assembly representatives
- Disability Aids and Information Centres
- District Occupational Therapists
- Visiting Neurodevelopmental Therapists
- Health Education Maori Staff from Area Health Boards
- District Offices of the Department of Social Welfare
- NZ Disabilities Resource Centre (Palmerston North)
- Tangata Whenua
- Your local Branch of NZ Crippled Children Society
- Your local Branch of the Royal NZ Foundation for the Blind
- Your local Branch of the NZ Society for the Intellectually Handicapped
- Your local Branch of the NZ Federation of Deaf Children

4. EQUIPMENT

In most instances children with special developmental needs will be absorbed into the regular early childhood programme without requiring any special equipment. Where special equipment is necessary, then several sources are available to early childhood settings, and in some cases directly to the child.

SOURCES

Special Education Service personnel are available to assist in the identification of required special equipment and this will be considered as part of an individual developmental plan meeting.

Funds for specialist equipment and materials, relevant technological equipment and assistive devices are available through the Ministry of Education.

However, apart from the Ministry of Education funding, there are other sources of supply. Discuss these sources with your local District Office of Special Education Service.

Health Department - through Area Health Boards and Community Health Services.

Mobility Aids - This includes assessment and provision of equipment specific to the child's needs.

Communication Aids

Personal Equipment - much of the personal equipment in day to day use will be sourced from the Hospital of the local Area Health Board. Extension to or modification of this service to meet early childhood needs can be sought through a visiting therapist or district nursing service (Community Health Services), and paediatric occupational therapists and physio- therapists. Personal equipment supplies are also available through retail sources.

Department of Social Welfare - through the provisions of the Disabled Persons Community Welfare Act 1975, Section 15A. Specialist equipment to assist communication specifically in support of individual educational, or social development programmes. There is funding available for an individual's travel to any health or assessment centre for an equipment assessment.

Accident Compensation Corporation - for children disabled as a result of an accident, either temporarily or permanently. Assistance is available on a case by case basis. This includes additional costs related to sustaining an appropriate educational programme.

The initial contact is through the child's ACC Liaison Officer.

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Support Agencies - these agencies offer support to clients in general or specific disability areas and are able to assist by facilitating equipment solutions or by allocation of resources from their own programmes. (Refer to Section 9, for Directory of Agencies).

5. FUNDING SOURCES

The bulk funding from the Ministry of Education is provided for all children in chartered early childhood settings. However, where the Individual Development Plan process identifies the need for extra resources application can be made for additional funding to the Ministry of Education on the recommendation of the Special Education Service.

The Ministry of Education provides funding for a variety of purposes.

1. **Physical Plant**
Funds are specifically tagged for mainstreaming to assist early childhood centres provide ramps etc.
2. **Transport**
Funds are provided for the transportation of children with special development needs on the recommendation of the Special Education Service.
3. **Discretionary Ancillary (Teacher Aide) hours**
This support is available through the Ministry of Education on the recommendation of the Special Education Service.

Other major financial support areas that could be tapped for additional resources are:

1. Ministry of Education
2. Health Services - Area Health Boards
3. Department of Social Welfare
4. Accident Compensation Corporation
5. Some Voluntary Agencies
6. Philanthropic Trusts
7. Lottery Board of Control
8. Church Trusts
9. Iwi Authorities
10. Service Clubs and special project funds and Trusts.

NB: All of the above have stated criteria and policies.

Resources and References

- A Directory of Philanthropic Trusts in New Zealand, 3rd ed. Compiled by Arthur E Fieldhouse.
- The Acts of Parliament under which statutory groups operate. The regulations and circulars that relate to sections of these Acts.
- The promotional pamphlet material available on services, eg. from Health, DSW, ACC.

Some examples:

- * Education Act (1989) and amendments
- * Health and Area Health Boards Act and amendments
- * Accident Compensation Corporation Act (1974) and amendments
- * Disabled Persons Community Welfare Act (1975)

6. ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- i. All people working with young children must be aware of each child's special developmental needs in order to effectively plan and implement individual programmes.
- ii. Each child with special developmental needs represents a link into a network of resource people.
- iii. Your first resources are parents and others involved in the regular care of the child. Don't forget to listen to the children. Children can inform early childhood personnel about their own specific needs.
- iv. The Special Education Service has a major responsibility to provide support and advice regarding children with special developmental needs.
- v. There are skilled professionals to teach self care, toileting, feeding, dressing, lifting and transferring skills; how to handle wheelchairs and give information about specific disabilities and the implications of these for all persons working with young children.
- vi. Early childhood personnel need to know about:
 - falls
 - seizures
 - bleeding
 - fractures
 - body temperature changes
 - absence of sensation or pain and precautions for management etc

This information is readily available from a number of support agencies. (Refer Section 9).

- vii. There will always be resource people in your community who are also invaluable in induction and training programmes for people working with young children.

viii. Resources

- Special Education Service
- Community Health Services
- tutors and domiciliary staff
- Visiting neurodevelopmental therapists, paediatric occupational therapists and paediatric physiotherapists
- Alternative Care Scheme funded by the Department of Social Welfare
- Health education staff from Area Health Boards

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- Maori Religious Leaders
- Early Childhood Development Unit staff including Maori coordinators and Pacific Island co-ordinators
- Tangata Whenua - who may be able to assist with support and advice about Ture (Laws)
- People with disabilities themselves (contacts through Disabled Persons Assembly Regional Committees, Parent to Parent groups, local branches of support agencies.)
- Voluntary Agency Staff
 - Regional Training and development staff
 - Field officers, social workers
- Information Centres
- Consultants working in the disability field
- Tapes, videos, films and publications.

NB: Most listed agencies have available packaged information in their sphere of concern.

The following organisations provide a library service available to the public:

New Zealand Society for the Intellectually Handicaped (IHC),
National Office, P O Box 4155, Wellington.

Crippled Children Society, National Office, P O Box 6349,
Wellington.

Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, National Office,
Private Bag 41, Newmarket, Auckland

New Zealand Institute of Mental Retardation, P O Box 6189,
Dunedin

7. SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE (SES)

- i. Information and assistance for individual assessments and programme planning is available through the Special Education Service. (SES)
- ii. The SES is a freestanding, self administering organisation funded through an annual agreement with the Minister of Education. It provides advice, guidance and support for the benefit of infants, children and young people with special developmental, educational and social needs.
- iii. The SES consists of a national office led by a general manager and twelve district offices each led by a district manager. Most districts have personnel based in local centres within their district.
- iv. The Agreement between the SES and the Ministry of Education states what services the SES will provide. A service plan will be developed by each district regarding early intervention service in full consultation with other service providers and relevant special interest groups.
- v. The field-based personnel in each district are speech/language therapists, psychologists, visiting teachers, advisers on deaf children, district advisers (early intervention), advisers on handicapped children, early intervention teachers (itinerant), and special group teachers. Some of these personnel are considered to be integral members of early intervention teams while others will have a considerable involvement with particular children and their families.
- vi. An Individual Development Plan (IDP) will be the key to meeting the special developmental needs of the infant or young child. Parents, whanau, and all those who provide a service to the infant or young child in the community will be involved in the IDP process. This process involves assessment, objective setting, programme development and implementation and the identification of resources necessary to meet the infant's or young child's needs in all the regular settings of which they are part.
- vii. When resources controlled by the Ministry of Education are required, for example discretionary ancillary hours or transport, a recommendation will be made to the Ministry of Education by the Special Education Service.

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viii. List of Special Education Service District Offices

There are 12 district offices, located at:

Northland (Whangarei)	Tel: (089) 487-677
Auckland	(09) 520-3150
Manukau (Manurewa)	(09) 266-3260
Waikato (Hamilton)	(071) 82-226
Bay of Plenty (Rotorua)	(073) 481-339
Central (Palmerston North)	(063) 830-654
Hawkes Bay (Napier)	(070) 354-654
Wellington	(04) 847-644
Nelson	(054) 82-344
Canterbury (Christchurch)	(03) 798-800
Otago (Dunedin)	(024) 778-610
Southland (Invercargill)	(021) 86-726

8. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT UNIT (ECDU)

- i The purpose of the Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU) is to promote and encourage the development and provision of quality, accessible and culturally appropriate early childhood services.
- ii The ECDU operates in five activity areas:
 - 1. Community development and family support
 - 2. Advice and support to Funded Playgroups and Pacific Island Language groups.
 - 3. Advisory support for licensed or chartered services
 - 4. Training for staff, management and parents involved in early childhood services.
- 5. Advice to the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education.
- iii The ECDU has a national office in Wellington and eleven district offices. Some districts have an additional office in a local centre within the district.
- iv Each district office has a district manager with a team of early childhood co-ordinators. All districts, as part of the co-ordinator team, have a Maori co-ordinator and nine of the districts have a Pacific Island co-ordinator.
- v The ECDU district team offers information, advice and support for early childhood groups and organisations working towards meeting minimum standards and developing charters.
- vi The ECDU offices are located at:

1	Whangarei	Tel	(089) 483 320
	Kaikohe	Tel	(0887) 81 692
2	Auckland West, Central	Tel	(09) 523 1989
3	Manukau	Tel	(09) 267 4262
4	Waikato	Tel	(071) 380 106
5	Rotorua	Tel	(073) 480 543
6	Wanganui	Tel	(064) 55 823
7	Hawkes Bay	Tel	(070) 356 508
	Gisborne	Tel	(079) 79 769
8	Wellington	Tel	(04) 753 168
	Masterton	Tel	(059) 89 996
9	Nelson	Tel	(054) 69 909
	Greymouth	Tel	(027) 7210
10	Christchurch	Tel	(03) 798 807
11	Dunedin	Tel	(024) 792 706
	Invercargill	Tel	(021) 83 186

9. SUPPORT AGENCIES

- i. There are a number of national support agencies which have local Branches throughout the country which you can contact directly. Other support agencies are available in some districts too. If you require information about any of these contact your district office of the Special Education Service for those operating in your area.
- ii. Some of the National Support Agencies are:
 - CCS (Crippled Children's Society)
 - IHC (Society for the Intellectually Handicapped)
 - RNZFB (Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind)
 - Federation for Deaf Children
 - Parent to Parent

Contact telephone numbers for their local branches are in your local telephone book listed as above, or contact Special Education Service or Early Childhood Development Unit.

Support agencies which may be available in your area include:

New Zealand Crippled Children Society (CCS) - a voluntary organisation for advocacy and support of children and adults with physical disabilities and their families.

IHC (New Zealand Society for the Intellectually Handicapped (Inc)) - a voluntary organisation for advocacy and support of children and adults with intellectual handicaps and their families.

Parent-to-Parent - a parent organisation for information sharing and parent contact.

Services available from these agencies include:

- Parent support and advocacy
- Hands-on support for children with special needs in their local early childhood setting
- Advice and information for staff and parents
- Help to staff and parents in determining the support needs of children in their local setting
- On-going itinerant support in specialist areas
- Assistance with on-going monitoring of the child's progress, and changing support needs
- Relief and respite care services for parents ranging from home help and short term overnight relief care to foster care
- Information on disabilities and on services resources available.

10. COMMON MYTHS AND PRACTICAL RESPONSES

Common Myths

There are many myths about children with special developmental needs:

- i that a child with an intellectual disability is also physically disabled;
- ii that they are a danger to others and to themselves;
- iii that they are disruptive, exhibit antisocial behaviour, are not toilet trained and are generally helpless;
- iv that there are going to be hordes of children with special developmental needs suddenly descending on early childhood settings;
- v that making an early childhood setting accessible will only benefit children with special developmental needs;
- vi that there will be extensive costs in making an early childhood setting accessible;
- vii that the resources have to be in place before a child can attend an early childhood setting;
- viii that early childhood personnel need to be specially trained in working with children with special developmental needs.

Practical Responses

There are practical responses to myths that surround children with special developmental needs:

- i that children with special developmental needs are children first and foremost, who happen to have a special developmental need - early childhood personnel need to focus on the child and not the disability;
- ii that all children benefit from the presence of children with special developmental needs in an early childhood setting;
- iii that early childhood personnel focus on a child's abilities and through the assistance of the parents and other resource people develop an Individual Development Plan for each child;
- iv that in reality there is a very small percentage of children with special developmental needs;
- v that safe and accessible environments will be of benefit to the whole community of the early childhood setting, which includes children, staff, parents and visitors;

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- vi that early childhood settings will find that the costs are minimal once they have an understanding and commitment to making the environment safe and accessible;
- vii that early childhood personnel should be ready to welcome children with special developmental needs knowing that each child with a special developmental need represents a link into a network of resource people;
- viii that parents of children with special developmental needs are a first resource for advice and support in how to work with their child. There will always be resource people in the community who will be able to provide advice and support on particular special developmental needs.